Rex of Lincoln Green: The Best Dog in All of Britain

By Valeria Sanchez

The swamps of York were misty in the early morning, the reeds bending low to brush the water's skin while ravens cried and the earth itself seemed to breathe beneath the fog. In that wild place lived a young man called Aloe Vera, dressed in Lincoln green, with boots muddied from long paths and a hood shading his brow. Though he had no wealth and no castle to his name, he possessed something far greater: his Rottweiler, Rex, the best dog in all of Britain. Rex's coat was black as the shadows beneath the willows, with brown markings that glowed like embers. His eyes shone with intelligence, and his bark carried the strength of ten men. But for all his might, he was gentle with Aloe, his true friend, his companion, his brother. Aloe often said aloud, as if reminding the world, "My dog Rex is my friend. He likes to play. He likes to drink water. He likes to go outside and enjoy the sun." Each morning, when dawn broke, Rex barked at the hut door until Aloe rose. Together they ran through meadows, Aloe's cloak flying like a banner while Rex leapt over roots and streams. They played until Aloe collapsed laughing, and Rex sat beside him, panting happily. There was no finer sight, Aloe thought, than Rex lying in the grass, regal as a knight in repose. He looked clever climbing the old watchtower stairs, playful leaping over brooks, loyal when he pressed close to listen. Aloe believed Rex understood every word, tilting his head, wagging his tail, answering without speech. When heat weighed heavy, Rex napped in the shade, paws twitching in dreams. Aloe imagined those dreams: cats and squirrels chased through endless fields, rabbits darting, maybe even battles fought against wolves or bandits. In those dreams Rex was a hero, and in waking life he was no less. Aloe never denied him play, though always after chores were done. He stacked wood, fetched water, then they were free to explore. Sometimes Aloe told Rex stories as if to another boy: "What would it be like if dogs were green? Or red? Or blue? Or yellow?" Rex wagged, barked, turned his head, and somehow answered. They laughed in their own way, sharing a secret world until night fell and the stars stirred overhead. Then Rex curled beside Aloe, warm against the chill. When morning returned, Rex nudged him awake with a moist nose, a signal that meant: *I am here, I am hungry, I am ready, do not be afraid.*

They often walked into the nearby city. Rex loved to sniff everything—bread stalls, barrels of fish, wagon wheels, old stone walls. He barked at horses, wagged at children, and eyed the guards with suspicion. Aloe trusted him: if Rex growled, there was reason. "He always tells me how he feels," Aloe said. "I can read it in his tail. High means proud, low means sad, stiff means ready to fight." And fight he would, for more than once his bark drove prowlers away. Aloe dreamed of training him further—to give his paw, to roll, to spin, maybe even to square dance at the village fair. "Wouldn't that be grand?" Aloe laughed, and Rex barked in agreement. Without Rex, Aloe's life would have been lonely. With Rex, each day was adventure.

He remembered when Rex was small, paws too big for his body, stumbling across the hut floor. Aloe carried him everywhere, fed him scraps of bread and drops of milk, and felt the first lick of that small pink tongue. Years turned, and the puppy became strong: chest broad, bark deep, eyes wise. Yet he never stopped licking Aloe’s face, never stopped nudging with his moist nose, never stopped showing loyalty with every wag. Summer saw him panting in the sun, but faithful still. Winter found him guarding the hut, pressing close by the fire. Storms could not shake him; snow could not turn him away. Always at Aloe’s side, in warmth and in cold, Rex remained constant.

The villagers began to whisper of him. “That boy and his dog,” they said, “are inseparable.” Aloe told tales: “Rex is brave enough for wolves, smart enough to understand speech, loyal enough never to leave me.” Some doubted, but those who met Rex believed. Bards sang of knights and steeds, but Aloe dreamed of songs about boys and their dogs, of companionship as noble as any chivalry. If ever a ballad were made of Aloe of Lincoln green, it would not tell of riches or conquest—it would tell of Rex, the guardian and friend who was legend in his own right.

As the sun sank, painting the swamps in gold, Aloe and Rex walked to the meadow’s edge. The dog barked once, twice, and Aloe laughed. “Yes, boy. Tomorrow will be another adventure.” They returned to the hut, where Aloe fell asleep with Rex beside him. Stars turned above, and Rex dreamed his dog-dreams—of chasing, running, guarding, loving. Because there had never been, and never would be, a better dog than Rex.